



The Salamanca Corpus: *Arkwright's Wife* (1873)

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HISTORICAL DRAMAS

BY

TOM TAYLOR, M.A.

LATE FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

LONDON
CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY
1877

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[NP]

TO

MY TRUEST FRIEND AND BEST ADVISER

MY WIFE

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PREFACE.

ALL the Plays included in this volume have been acted; and all but one may fairly be said to form part of the 'stock' or acting plays of the time. 'Anne Boleyn' is the only play in the volume which has not, as yet, been performed in any other theatre than that in which it was produced.

I have no wish to screen myself from literary criticism behind the plea that my plays were meant to be acted. It seems to me that every drama submitted to the judgment of audiences should be prepared to encounter that of readers. I have in all cases acknowledged in *notes* attached to the plays the sources to which I have been indebted for the suggestion of my subjects; not that I think Molière's rule, '*Je prends mon bien où je le trouve*,' less pleadable by the dramatic author now than it was when he said it.

But, as I have sometimes been spoken of by critics more confident than well-informed as one whose work has always been that of adapter rather than inventor, it may be worth while to say here, in the first edition of any of my plays likely to

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reach other than professional readers, that of more than one hundred pieces which I have given to the Stage less than one tenth have been adaptations from foreign plays or stories.

Should this volume find readers, I may follow it up by one of Romantic Dramas, and another of Comedies and Comediettas.

TOM TAYLOR.

LAVENDER SWEEP,
APRIL, 1877.

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The Salamanca Corpus: Arkwright's Wife (1873)

ARKWRIGHT'S
WIFE

An Original Domestic Drama
IN THREE ACTS

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

ORIGINAL CAST.

RICHARD ARKWRIGHT	Mr. Charles Kelly.
PETER HAYES (<i>a reed-maker and mechanical inventor</i>)	Mr. J. Steele Mackaye
HILKIAH LAWSON	Mr. Henry Ferrand.
DICK O' JOHNS	Mr. Charles Anstruther.
BOB O' CHOWBENT	Mr. Harry St. Maur.
CHADWICK	Mr. John Inman.
ORMROD	Mr. Wm. Macfarlane.
SIR RICHARD CLAYTON	Mr. Bauer.
HAWORTH	Mr. Melton.
BAILIFF	Mr. Johnson.
MARGARET HAYES	Miss Helen Barry.
NANCY HYDE	Miss A. M. Kelly.

Soldiers, Rioters, Charity Children, Village Lasses.

	TIME.	PLACE.
Act 1	1767	<i>Leigh.</i>
Act 2	1768	<i>Preston.</i>
Act 3	1786	<i>Birkacre, near Chorley</i>

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ARKWRIGHT'S WIFE.
ACT I.

Scene.—*Poorly-furnished room in Peter Hayes's house, Leigh. Low window (c. in flat) looking on village. Door in flat, L. C. Stair leading to upper room, R. 2 E. Fireplace, wide and open, L. 2 E. Door, R. 3 E. Everything betrays poverty — furniture old-fashioned. Table, two chairs, clock, spinning-wheel.*

Nancy (without). Maggie, lass! (*Enters.*) Not at her wheel! Eh, but that's a sight, Saturday as it is, and all Leigh out at market. (*Apostrophising wheel.*) Thou should be glad of a rest, ou'd bumbler, for it's few thou gets wi' Maggie. It's well there's one pair o' hands in the house that addles since the ou'd man ceased to work at his reed- making.

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Though there's more spent than saved at back end, I reckon, for all thy huzzin' and buzzin', ou'd chap; and there's not a spinner in Leigh turns out as much weft i' the week as Margret Hayes. But the ou'd man taks every penny!

[Peter appears at garret door with part of a model in his hand.]

Peter. Now, Maggie, lass, what's come o' t' breakfast? I'm fair clemmed. Drat that wheel, dost hear?

Nancy. Nay. It's none Marget It's nobbut me, Nan o' Jacks. I've come wi' a word for Maggie.

Peter. You can leave it wi' me, can't ye? (*Coming down.*) Happen I can still be trusted wi' a lass's message, though it's little else they'll trust me wi' in Leigh now-a-days—the blind buzzards.

Nancy. That's what comes o' knowing more than your neighbours, Mr. Hayes.

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Peter. Ah, there's nought so like a fool among wise men as a wise man among fools.

Nancy. Why, down i' Bob o' Dick's bar the folks say you're little better than a warlock—that you spend neets on neets i' your garret yonder, castin' figures and reading fortunes i' the stars.

Peter. Ah—fortuns should be easy readin' if all folks had their dues.

Nancy. But schoolmaster says he'll be bound your seeking Lucifer's stone. Please, whatten a stone's that, Mr. Hayes?

Peter. Philosopher's stone—not Lucifer's! Thou'rt only confoundin' the doctors with the devil—like thy betters; a stone mony wise men and more fools broke their shins over for mony a hundred years—the stone that turns all metal into gold, lass.

Nancy. Lor' a massy! and be there such a stone, Mr. Hayes?

Peter. Aye, lass!

Nancy. But you've none found it?

Peter. Not yet. But I may be nearer to it than these Leigh wiseacres think, for all I'm not seekin' it o' the road they fancy. (*Rises.*) I tell thee, Nancy Hyde, there *is* a way to turn brass and iron into gold, and I'm on't. You may tell t' schoolmaster that much next time you see him, but no more — no more. Old Peter Hayes mayn't be able to keep the pence in his pocket till he can jingle shillings against the sots and Solomons at the 'King's Yead,' but he can keep his own secret—he can keep his own secret.

Nancy. And mine, too, I hope—the secret I came to tell Maggie. Hilkiah will be fair savage if he knew I had letten it out. (*Whispers.*) They're goin' to seize t' sticks here to-day for t' rent.

Peter. Nay, niver! Will Learoyd's a hard chap, but he would niver do that —why, we were lads together.

Nancy. But Hilkiah knows. He's to help t' bailiffs. Nay, it's no use looking at me like that, Mr. Hayes. So I thought I would warn Marget. Happen there was something I could smuggle out o' t' place before they seize. There's Marget's wheel.

Peter. Rot her wheel! What's to come o' my machine-models—the fruit I've watered wi' my brain—sweat for days and nights, and weeks and years—my hard long life's work,

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lass—and just as it is comin' to bearin'! Lose them! lose all! all! I'll ha' them packed up, and out at garret window, and ower house-top into your place i' the turn o' a crank. Thy father will gi' them house-room. (*Rises and staggers.*) My models—my models!

Nancy (supporting him). Mind, Mr. Hayes. Tak hand o' me—you're weak i't' legs.

Peter. It's nobbut want o' meat. But what matter o' meat now? My models, lass—my models!

[*Makes his way eagerly up stair.*]

Nancy. Poor oud chap! There's my porridge waiting for me. I can want it better than the oud man. I'll slip it into their cupboard before Marget knows; she's ower proud to owe meat or money! Here she comes; I mun slip out at back door.

[*Exit R. 3 e. door.*]

Enter Margaret with basket; sets it down; goes to cupboard (L.), opens it, sighs, shakes her head sadly.

Margt. Nay, where should the meat come from? Did I think father was the wizard Leigh folks call him to conjure bare boards into bread? [I've brought myself down to begging. If 'twas but asking credit for a stone o' meal it was still begging. There's a bill at the shop already. 'We'd trust thee, Marget, and welcome, but thou knows what comes o' thy earnings.' The old tale I've heard since I were a lassock. His flesh and blood must keep his bits o' brass and iron, and can't do it, though they work eyes blind and fingers sore. (*Turning to wheel.*) Well, I must fast till I've finished this hank. Bob o' Dicks will be round for weft this afternoon. I can clem a bit, easy enough, but there's poor father.]

Peter (at garret door). Ah, Marget, back at last. (*Comes down.*) Thou mun hurry porridge, lass; I'll eat it standing, and then thou can help me to take my bits o' things to pieces.

Margt. Take thy models to pieces, father? You're none tired o' them?

Peter. Nay, lass, nay—scarce likely. It's to save them out o' t' place—t' bailiffs are coming to seize for t' rent, Nancy Hyde tells me.

Margt. The bailiffs?

Peter. It's hard to think Will Learoyd could be such a fool. Why, I told him the road I was upon.

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Margt. Easy enough to know that, I'm afraid.

Peter. Nay, niver. I keep it as close as the grave. Thou's not let on to anybody? What, lass, what?

Margt. Why, father, I thought you knew me better. I've none made a poor lip, not even when our want was sorest; but what need o' words to tell the gait we're goin'—wi' empty platters and cold hearthstone, and t' house place nigh as naked as the cupboard? Don't all Leigh see we're gettin' poorer and poorer?

Peter. Poorer and poorer, thou chicken heart, when every penny I lay out is bound to come back wi' a million behind it! When I've machines up yonder that only want a bit more time and brass to finish, and a world wi' fewer fools to work in, and Peter Hayes and his lass may be the richest lord and the grandest lady between Lune and Mersey.

Margt. Still fooling thyself with that dream, father?

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Peter. Dream! Is that wheel a dream? That hank o' flax—that spindle—that treadle—these hands o' thine? As sure as they can turn out their day's tale of weft in a day, there's my bonny little iron spinner, hard on birth, up yonder, that will do a thousand times their work, in a tenth o' the time, at a hundredth o' t' cost. Ha, ha, ha! I like that—a dream! Ha, ha, ha!

Margt. Father, you forget how often I've heard that song. I heard it when you gave up reed-making—I was a bairn then, in answer to mother's prayer that you'd stick to the craft that had kept a good roof over t' Hayes's heads for more than a hundred years; and when she sickened o' hard times and sore sorrow, and clemmed sooner than ask help—it was wi' that song you tried to stop your bairns crying for their mother and for bread! And when brother and sister died of the weakness that followed the fever, and that craved better meat and drink than you had to give them, and I was left alone to help, that song was all we had to comfort us over those little coffins. And what has it come to? Money, and more money still, for wheelwright, and clockmaker, and turner, and caster, and carpenter—money and mockery and misery—delusion, disappointment, and despair!

Peter. Oh, that my own bairn should turn against me like this!

Margt. Nay, thou knows I'd give thee night's work and day's work; I'd clem for thee.—Have I not begged for thee?—if I believed what thou'art seeking could be found,

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and found for good. But thou sees what thy labour and thought comes to, and thou'rt not the only one by many. Why, there's Kay at Bury, and Hargreaves at Blackburn, and Paul at Birmingham, and a many more that Parson Trafford told us of only last week. It's been with them as with thee—not one but is a branded and a broken man.

Peter. Nay. They're on the wrong scent—gone astray after windin' and cardin', weavin' and dressin'. It's the spinnin' I'm after, lass—that's the root o' the matter—that's the problem—how to do wheel's work without wheels, and a thousand times better, and cheaper and faster.

Margt. And so starve all the spinners, and stop all the wheels in Lancashire!

Peter. Ah, the old fool's reason!

Margt. Much good that'll bring the country, and much love that will breed him that brings it, even if your invention did all you say. What is making one rich to keeping a hundred poor?

Peter. Oh, these women—(*crosses to R.*)—these women! As if it were not enough to fight wi' fools out o' doors, but I must fight my own bairn on my own hearthstone! But I'll punish thee. Thou shall not set finger to my models. Thou'rt not worthy to look at them, much less touch them.

[*Going towards stairs.*]

Margt. Nay, let me help thee.

Peter. Stand off! Thou'rt no child o' mine to say what thou hast said e'en now.

Margt. Forgive me, father; I'm sore tried! We're alone in the world now. We mustn't be too hard on one another.

Peter. Standoff, I tell thee. I mun work my own work after thi

[*Exit upstairs.*]

Margt. Nay, then. Heaven help him and me! If we have not love left us, what have we?

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Enter Nancy with basin in hands.

Nancy. Here, Maggie, lass; I've brought thee a basin of our porridge—we'd more than we could sup. There's enough for thy father, too, and it's hot as hot, and made wi' sweet milk. Now, Maggie, woman, I'll run up to thy father wi' it. Here, sup, lass, and put a little life in thee.

[While speaking she has been fussing about, getting spoons, & c.]

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Margt. Thou'rt a good lass, Nancy. May'st thou never want as bad; and if thou dost, may'st thou find as good a heart as thine own to help thee.

[Sups.]

Nancy. Hout! Here's a stir about a sup of porridge! *(Goes upstairs; knocks at Peter's door.)* Here, Mr. Hayes—here's thy porridge.

Peter (within). Set it down.

Nancy. Margret says you mun sup it hot.

Peter. Margret be damned!

Nancy. Oh!

Peter. I'll take nought at her hand.

Nancy. Then you mun tak' it at mine. *(Puts in basin; comes down.)* Summut ha' set his back up. He's told thee what's coming?

Margt. Aye, has he. 'Twas scarce news. I've seen it getting nearer and nearer this long while. Oh, Nancy, whatever shall we do without a roof over our heads?

Nancy. There's room under ours till you can look about you. It's not the first time we've been bedfellows. But I've better news for thee than t' bailiffs. Dost want to earn three golden guineas in as many minutes, lass?

Margt. Do I? That's quicker than weft-spinning. How?

Nancy. Thou know'st me and Hilkiah's been asked these two Sundays. No lass o' the Hydes ever went to her man empty-handed. Here's what I've got to help our housing—*(shows grey stocking, with money)*—a matter o' ten pound—seven pound ten saved at spinning, and the rest out of my own yead.

Margt. Out o' thy own head? Nay, that's like poor father's talk.

Nancy. Look here, lass. *(Unties handkerchief, worn round her head; shows close-cropped hair.)*

Margt. Why, Nancy, whatever's come o' thy hair? Thou's shaved close as a lad.

Nancy. Aye! t' crop's cut, and sold and paid for; and it brought me two pound ten. And thine should bring twice as much, for it's twice as long, and more than twice as bonny. T' man that buy's 'em is i' t' market-place e'en now; he's a Bolton chap; Arkwright, they call him; and his tongue is as sharp as his scissors; and he has a box wi' scents and essences, that you would swoon to smell at, they're so sweet; and all sorts of dyes for the wig-makers, he says; and orrispowder,

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and Sheffield razors, and the Lord knows all what. Aye, and wi' money in his pockets, they say, to buy all the good heads o' hair i' Leigh.

Margt. He buys none o' mine, I can tell him.

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Nancy. Nay, I told him o' that bonny wig o' thine. There's not another like it for twenty townships round. I gave him thy name, and showed him the house.

Margt. Then thou took'st too much upon thyself, Nancy Hyde. While I've hands to spin I'll none part wi' my hair.

Nancy. Hush! Here's Hilkiah. (*Puts on handkerchief.*)

Enter Hilkiah.

Hilkiah. Good day, Marget. Nancy's told thee? Lea-royd's bent on seizin'; I don't know what they couldn't do to me for tellin'.

Nancy. I know what I'd a' done to thee if thoud'st not told.

Margt. I take it very kind o' thee, Hilkiah.

Hilkiah. Well, it *is* kind. I've searched books in our office, Newgate Calendar and all, and I can't find a case of t' sort; but I reckon I'm something like an accessory before the fact, and that's hanging sometimes. But I thought you'd like to save the wheel, at least.

Margt. And father's models.

Hilkiah. What! yon bits o' gim-cracks up in t' garret? Nay, they'll none be worth seizing. But the wheel'll fetch a price.

Nancy. Never fear, Maggie; I'll tak charge o' that.

Margt. When are they like to be here?

Hilkiah. As soon as old Crookmouth can get down his pint at the King's Yead; him and Learoyd's wetting t' writ.

Nancy. I wish the pint might choke him.

Hilkiah. Amen. I don't see but Leigh might get over t' loss.

Margt. I must prepare father for their coming—help him to take his models to pieces—the inventions he hopes such wonders from. He must never know they're not even worth seizing.

[*Exit, upstairs.*]

Nancy. Thou's been a good lad i' this, Hilkiah, and I'm proud o' thee for once.

Hilkiah. That's a comfort! But lawyers' lads, that

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hopes to be lawyers one day, ought to follow their masters' example.

Nancy. How dost mean?

Hilkiah. Never advise without a fee. I might ask thee six and eightpence, but I'll tak' it short, as they say at Ormerod's bank.

Nancy. Whatten way's that?

Hilkiah. Come here till I show thee. (*Kisses her, and in the struggle her handkerchief comes off and shows her cut hair.*) Lord save us! Why, whatever hast thou been and gone and done? Had thy head shaved?

Nancy. I was forced to have it cut off. So many oud sweethearts wanted bits o't, now I'm going to swop the lot o' them for thee.

[*Washes up dishes with hot water from kettle.*]

Hilkiah. I don't like it, I tell thee. Since we've been asked i' the church I've what the law calls a vested interest i' thee. Thou hast no right to give away so much as a

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single hair without my leave and license, let alone a whole head on't. That's law, lass. Dost hear?

Nancy. But possession's nine points of the law. My hair's mine while it's on; and when it's off, it's his I choose to give it to

Hilkiah. Give it to?

Nancy (putting back the kettle). Aye, give it to. Thou'lt get quite as much as thy deserts if thou gets Nancy Hyde without her hair.

Hilkiah. I don't like it, I tell thee. I don't know that I'm bound to go on wi' banns after this. You contracted to deliver a certain article with its appurtenances; one of t' appurtenances is gone. The corpus of the contract has been damaged before delivery.

Nancy. Who do you call Corpus?

Hilkiah. But I say, Nancy—(*coaxingly*)—you're joking? You never let t' chap have it?

Nancy. Yes, I did. He wanted it so bad, I couldn't say him nay.

Hilkiah. I wish I had his head under my hands, that's all; I'd take thy head o' hair out o' his, I would. But there's another Sunday's asking. Suppose, when Parson Trafford inquires if anybody knows any just cause or impediment why Hilkiah Lawson and Nancy Hyde should not be joined together in holy matrimony, I was to get up and say 'I do; Nancy Hyde has gotten her head shaved?

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Enter Arkwright, briskly.

Arkw. I beg pardon. (*Recognises Nancy.*) Ah, my pretty customer, I think this is the house you showed me; and now for the famous head o' hair I was to see.

Hilkiah. Oh! ho! So you're the chap that looks after lasses' heads o' hair.

[*Going up to him.*

Arkw. And lads' too; only lasses' are longer, and bonnier, and easier working into wigs. Ecce signum! (*Points to Nancy.*) I couldn't offer much for yours, though I'll bid as high as any man i' the business.

Hilkiah. Business?

Arkw. Aye, sir. I'm not above it, I'm thankful to say. Dick Arkwright, of Bolton. 'Easy shaving; ladies' and gentlemen's hair cut and dressed; wigs dyed, dressed, and made to order after the newest London and Paris fashions.' That's a flam; but nothing else goes down. Can I do anything for you, sir? A touch o' comb and scissors could do no harm to your thatch. Excuse me, if I can't call it hair, wi' hers fresh in my box.

Hilkiah. Fresh i' thy box! I'll box thee.

[*Squaring out.*

Arkw. Excuse me—(*brandishes scissors*)—but these are my weapons. I keep my hands for more useful employment than bruising.

Hilkiah. But how do I know thou'rt a barber?

Arkw. The proof of the pudding—excuse me, but your beard is decidedly stubbly. If I might suggest a shave.

Hilkiah. I'll shave thee —

Arkw. *Au contraire*, as they say in Paris. Suppose I shave you? Here's towel, hot water, and everything at hand.

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[As Hilkiah approaches, angrily, A. pushes him into a chair, whips the jack-towel round his neck, knotting it behind, and so tying him to the chair with it by neck and shoulders; then nimbly out with shaving-box, dips his shaving-brush into the basin in which Nancy has poured hot water, after Margaret had eaten her porridge, and lathers and shaves Hilkiah, while he talks; stopping every attempt of Hilkiah's to speak by thrusting the shaving-brush into his mouth.]

Nancy. That's right, man! he grudged thee my hair;

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tak his beard to balance it, and prove thou'rt no sweetheart, nobbut a barber.

Arkw. Delighted to oblige any friend of yours in the way of my trade. Yes, 'barber' is the vulgar version of it, but you might add, wig-maker, inventor of hair-dyes, and hair-merchant to boot. The more know Dick Arkwright the better. No. 9, King Street, Bolton, one flight down the area stairs. 'The subterraneous barber,' as they call me, because, for want of a shop, I am content wi' a cellar. But what tho'? Business is business; small profits make quick returns. If any man shave for a penny, I'll under-shave for a halfpenny. There you are, sir, a cleaner and a cooler man, I'll be bound. Nobody ever felt the worse for a shave yet, especially when, as in this instance, the beard was three days old, the razor sharp, the soap sweet, the towel smooth, and no charge made. *(During this speech he has shaved, wiped, and untied H. Presents him with his hat, barber-fashion, with a bow.)* Your hat, sir. *(To Nancy.)* Allow me to offer you this bottle of the Queen of Sheba's essence; supposed to be compounded after a receipt given her by King Solomon, and of sovereign virtue for making short hair shoot again in all its native luxuriance.

Hilkiah *(looking in small hand-glass)*. Ah, but he's a rare 'un to shave. Come, lad, I like thy impudence.

Arkw. The quality of our trade; like a ready tongue and a nimble pair o' fingers.

Hilkiah. But what right hast thou to this lass's head o' hair?

Arkw. The best of all rights—that of bargain and sale.

Hilkiah. Bargain and sale?

Nancy. Aye, thou gommock! He's bought and paid for't, and here's the brass—*(jingling her stocking)*—though I doubt it's going a bad road—to Hilkiah Lawson's pocket, when he takes Nancy Hyde 'for better for worse.'

(On his trying to take the stocking out of her hand, she raps him over the fingers.)

Nancy *(to Arkwright)*. The lass I told thee of will be here by-and-bye. Now shoulder th' wheel, Hilkiah, and be off wi' 't to our place.

Hilkiah *(takes wheel)*. Bilking t' bailiffs! I doubt it's felony i' the eyes of the law.

Nancy. Bother the law! It's kindness in the eyes of honest folks.

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If thou couldst carry big table, best bed, and eight-day clock to boot, I'd like to mak' thee.

Hilkiah. And leave nought at all for bailiff? Nay, that would be hanging straight off, without benefit o' clergy.

[Exit door flat.]

Arkw. Ho, ho! an execution in the wind. Bad off here, are they?

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Nancy. Desperate bad. She's as hard-working a lass as ever turned a wheel; t'best spinner in Leigh or miles round. But the father takes it all; he hasn't done a stroke o' work these three years.

Arkw. A drunkard, eh?

Nancy. Worse! What he calls an inventor.

Arkw. And what may that be?

Nancy. Nought good, whatever 'tis —nobbut potterin' over queer-looking wheels and whirligigs in his garret yonder. [I've peeped in sometimes. You never saw such a sight o' wheels, and bands, and rollers, and crinkum-crankums, i' wood, and iron, and brass; as if all the clocks in the world had been smashed to bits and put together again, wrong way upwards;] and he says he's making summut that will spin, without wheels or hands either. [The oud gommock!]

Arkw. So, so! I must have a look at his crinkum-crankums before I go.

Nancy. And while he's spendin' time and brass over them, there's Maggie spinning her fingers to the bone to pay for 'em [and can't neither, and that's how they're come to t' bailiffs]. (*Maggie appears at garret door.*) Hush! here she comes. Not a word to her of what I told thee. She's as proud as proud.

Arkw. Never fear!

[*Maggie slowly descends, sunk in deep thought.*]

Nancy (to Arkwright). Shall I get her to show you her hair?

Arkw. Leave that to me. And I say, lass—two's company and three's none.

Nancy. Thou'rt right, lad.

[*Exit.*]

Arkw. (looks at her) Aye, a rare head o' hair, sure enough; and a grand figure, and a bonny face, if it were not for the cloud on't.

Margt. (comes towards where wheel ought to be). The old

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wheel gone! Our bread-winner! (*Cries.*) Nay, what a fool I am! I know it's in good hands. But old friends are sad to miss.

[*Hides her face in apron, sobbing.*]

Arkw. (comes forward, touches her gently) Nay, cheer up, lass. April skies may be bonny, but May's sunshine is bonnier still.

Margt. Who are you? Not one of the bailiffs?

Arkw. No, thank'ee. Dick Arkwright, o' Bolton, at your service.

Margt. I never heard the name. What brings you here?

Arkw. Business; buying hair for the trade. I've seen some good heads o' hair in Leigh market this morning, but none like thine. Two pound ten's been my top price to-day, and it's not business-like to offer more without handling, but I don't mind saying three guineas down for thine—eye- bargain.

[*Margt.* Thank you, I've no mind to part wi' my hair.

Arkw. Few lasses have at first; it's most women's glory; but I never saw a face that could spare it better than thine.

Margt. Nay, I'm in no mind to listen to fooling.

Arkw. Nor I to talk it. I always stick to business, and I mean business now. But yours is a bonny face; and if it's so bonny i' the shade, what should it be i' the sunshine? Let's see. Try and smile a bit.

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Margt. It's light hearts breed smiles, and mine's heavy.

Arkw. There's nought to lighten hearts like loading purses. Let me put three guineas into thine.]

Margt. I'd sell clothes sooner than hair, if it was come to that!

Arkw. Unluckily, I'm not in the old clothes' line, or I'd mak' you a bid, if it were only for good will. (*Pause.*) But I see your hair is not what it looks.

Margt. (firing up) Not what it looks?

Arkw. For quantity, I mean. You Leigh lasses ape your betters—wearing those new-fashioned pads that make hair go twice as far. Nay, I'm up to the trick; don't I make 'em?

Margt. (angrily) There's no more padding about my head than thine own!—I don't say aught in praise of my hair.

Arkw. Nay, you may leave that to the men.

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Margt. But such as 'tis, 'tis my own, every bit on't.

Arkw. I don't believe it.

Margt. Thou doesn't? Thou shalt see. (*Takes off cap and kerchief, lets down hair.*) There!

Arkw. Thank you; but I should like to feel the weight of it.

Margt. Feel away, mon! and welcome.

Arkw. (takes hair in his hand). Eh, but it's bonny, bonny; as smooth as satin, and as soft as velvet.

Margt. Nought false there, mon, is there?

Arkw. I never thought there was.

Margt. Then why did'st say so?

Arkw. To mak' thee let it down.

Margt. 'Twas a mighty saucy trick o' thee.

Arkw. Only a trick of the trade. They don't count. I don't mind if I give thee another guinea.

Margt. (aside) Four guineas! It's three months' spinning. And what's losing my hair to clearing scores here before we go? None ever lost by the Hayeses till now.

[*Cries.*

Arkw. Nay, never cry.

Margt. I think it's missing the old wheel.

Arkw. It will come back; and if it shouldn't, thou would be well rid o't. Those little fingers were made for better work than drawing slivers into yarns for the weavers. (*Takes her hand.*) Nay, why should any fingers do such work, when wheels and rollers can do it better for them?

Margt. Wheels and rollers? Nay, now he's talking like poor father.

Arkw. Shows his good sense. The inventor the lass spoke of. (*Aside.*) Can he be on the same tack? So father talks about wheels and rollers, does he?

Margt. Aye, till I'm sick o' them; so please, no more o' that. If thou must ha' my hair, the sooner the better. (*Puts white cloth over shoulders and sits.*) I'm ready; where's thy scissors?

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Arkw. Nay, there's no hurry; and I'd like to look a bit first. I've never seen just this shade [and I'm hair-dyer as well as hair-dresser. I'll be bound thy father makes machines, as well as talk about them?

Margt. That's his business, not mine or thine; cut, I tell thee.

Arkw. Nay, let me catch the colour first.

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Margt. Thou canst do that when it's thine.

Arkw. Dead hair's not like living, and I never saw such a brown. It changes and changes; gold i' the sun—chestnut i' the shade. I've cut and carried hundreds o' crops], but somehow I feel it would be cruel to rob thee o' thine.

Margt. Nay, it's I who am going to rob thee—of four golden guineas. Cut away, man, and no more talk o't.

Arkw. (*is about to cut; then lays scissors aside*) It's a sin to part such a face and such hair—to strip that bonny head o' its crown o' glory.

Peter (*appears at garret door with wheels*). *Marget*, lass —canst find me a bit o' rope to tie these wheels together?

Margt. Hush, father! I'll look.

Peter. A stranger—a spy, perhaps! (*Sees her hair down —comes downstairs.*) Why, whatever art thou at, lass?

Margt. Having my hair cut, if this man would only begin.

Arkw. I can't—and won't.

Peter. Having thy hair cut? Is the lass crazy?

Arkw. Your servant, Mr. Hayes. It's my doing. I'm a dealer in hair—I tempted your daughter wi' a good price.

Margt. Four golden guineas!

Peter. Four guineas! (*Aside.*) That would just finish my six-roller model.

Arkw. I happen to know you want the money.

Peter. Thou seems to know a deal o' other folks' business, lad.

Arkw. Happen I do; for I know what you want it for. (*Peter stares.*) I'm not like Leigh folks, Mr. Hayes—I honour ingenuity and invention.

Peter. The devil thou does!

Arkw. If you will let me have a sight of your models, I don't mind if I advance the money as a loan, and let your lass keep her hair.

Peter. Let thee see my models?

Arkw. Mere curiosity. I'm no mechanic, you know—only a Bolton barber!

Peter. But thou'rt open to reason, more than these fools here are—happen thou't understand. But if the bailiffs were to come on us?

Margt. Nay, father. Hilkiah said they'd not seize thy models.

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Peter. Not seize my models? Hilkiah said so! And thou believed him? The one thing i' the place worth seizing. Thou fool! Dost not see their drift?—To keep me easy, lest I shift the things? And this fair-spoken chap! who knows but he may be in league with them? A valuer from Warrington, perhaps.

Arkw. Now, Mr. Hayes, if you'll lead the way.

Peter. Stand back! I'll none o' thy offers! I'll show thee nought!

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Arkw. Nay!

Peter. Stand back, or it may be the worse for thee! I'm prepared for such visitors—I keep a loaded gun in there!

[*Exit into garret.*]

Margt. You mustn't mind an old man's moods. As for this offer—I doubt not you meant it kindly. But anyhow, if you lend this money, let it be to me and not to father.

Arkw. Nay; you settle that between you. I only want to help you over a pinch.

Margt. But it was to me you offered first—and 'tis I must have it. Promise me you'll not give a shilling to father.

Arkw. Why, he's the head of the house, you know, and if he insists—

Margt. No matter. Tell him you have given me the money already. [Don't think I care for your guineas or grudge my father, but if he gets it 'twill but go as all has gone before, in work that brings no return (in models that cost heavy for making, only to be pulled to pieces when they are made. It seems a sin to wish aught ill that God gives us, but I feel in my heart as if I could pray there was no such thing as a machine in the world—nought but bare hands and plain tools, such as our fathers used before us.) My wheel has brought us honest bread; what have all his inventions brought us—but the bailiffs?

Arkw. And what is thy wheel but a machine? Perhaps he that invented that had a daughter that hated wheels, and sighed for distaff and spindle. Nay, what is this pretty hand o' thine but the most wonderful of all machines? It will never do to raise that against inventors.

Margt. I have seen the misery invention brings to them that toil at it in vain, and all who trust to them. I have seen mind and heart and feeling bent all to one thought, till they are made blind to the suffering and slow decay of those

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they loved once, and that loved them still. I've seen a generous man grow selfish, and a wise man wild and wilful. I've seen a bright hearth grow cold, and a happy home emptied of all but sorrow—and then you tell me not to curse invention!

Arkw. Hush, lass, hush! You may come to a different way o' thinking one day. I think I could teach thee—and I'd fain have thee to teach. It's not all inventors that are as fierce and feckless as thy father—nor as unlucky. There's them among them who can make a home, and keep a home too.]

Enter Hilkieah, hurriedly.

Hilk. Oud Crookmouth—I was just in time wi't' wheel. Lord! if he'd caught me!

Enter Bailiff.

Bailiff. I'm sorry for this, Marget! Where's thy father? (*Margaret points to garret.*) Here, Peter! Peter Hayes, you're wanted! Gang up, Hilkieah! Won't show, won't he? Door locked, eh? Put thy shoulder to t'jamb—we mun sarve.

[*Hilkieah breaks open door. Peter appears.*]

Peter. T' bailiff—too late!

Bailiff. I'm sorry for this, Peter, but Learoyd would wait no longer.

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Peter. I looked for better things from Will; but what must be must. (*Comes down. Bailiff puts writ in his hand.*) Nay, I'm sarved—right enough. Here's the things; you see all you have to look to. (*Points round.*)

Bailiff. Nay, I must know what's in the upper room.

Peter. Nobbut a ruckle of old iron, and bits o' clockwork—no use to Will, or anybody but me.

Bailiff. We must book 'em.

Peter. Nay, you've the value of th' rent here. You've no right to seize beyond th' rent. (*Getting between him and stairs.*)

Bailiff. Nay, I tell thee I must.

Peter (snatches up gun). If thou values thy life, mun!

Bailiff. A rescue! Nay, Hilkieah, we must do our duty.

Margt. Father! father!

Arkw. (coming forward) You'll find the law too strong for you, Mr. Hayes.

Peter. Aye, it always is too strong for honest folk. Here,

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Crookie, let Will take all that's here—table and chairs—meal ark, and eight-day clock—she's a real good 'un, with a new escapement o' my own—the beds from under us—Marget's wheel; only leave me my gimcracks yonder—an oud man's playthings! Thou knows oud men are bairns over again.

Bailiff. It's no use talking, Peter.

Peter. They're worth nought i't' market but for oud iron—and, oh! they're worth so much to me! [*Exit into garret.*]

Arkw. (calling to Bailiff) What's the amount of the writ?

Bailiff. There's t' figures. (*Giving paper*) You mak' out the list here, Hilkieah. I'll go and look round wi' Peter up yonder. [*Exit.*]

Margt. Aye, let all go—the cradle his dead bairns were rocked in—the bed they and mother died on—the wheel that's been bread to us—and all to save the bits o' brass and iron that have been his ruin!

Arkw. Look here, Marget. Excuse me calling you Marget; but sorrow makes speedy friends. I've offered once—I offer again—let me pay out t' bailiffs. I've the money handy, and you can owe it me.

Margt. Pay out the bailiffs? But who's to pay out you?

Arkw. What need to pay me out at all? I'll stay as man in possession, if you'll let me. Let me offer a home to you and your father—a home, and a husband to you.

Margt. A husband! why, man, I never set eyes on thee before to-day!

Arkw. Nought like love at first sight. Besides, I'll wait a month for thee before we're asked in church. Leave this house that's full of sorrowful memories, and come wi' me to Bowton.

Margt. You fairly take my breath away.

Arkw. Then you can't say no. Here you, Bailiff! What's his name?

Hilk. Oud Crookmouth when he's on t'job. His friends at the King's Yead call him Bummie.

Arkw. Here, Bummie! (*Bailiff appears.*) Here's thy money. You may cancel the writ.

[*Peter and Bailiff come down, followed by Hayes.*]

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Hilk. Hurrah!

[*Exit.*

Peter. The money—and they won't seize my mo — —, my playthings?

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Arkw. Not a wheel. I've settled wi' your daughter here. You're to come wi' me to Bowton. You're to have a garret to yourself—playthings and all. (*Pays money.*)

Peter. Is't a dream? No, I hear t' money jingling. Does he want a finger i' my pie? He'll find that none's so easy. Bowton, eh! Dost hear, Marget? That's a big place—spins nigh on its half million pounds o' cotton wi' its own hands—hundreds o' looms—thousands o' money; sharp yeads at Bowton, happen they'll see farther than the fools do here. I wash my hands o' Leigh. Let's be off, lass; the sooner the better.

Margt. It's hard to leave the place you were born in, however it may have used you. I'm fair dazed. (*To Arkwright.*) I suppose I may put up my hair now?

Enter Nancy and Hilkiah in triumph with wheel.

Nancy. Hilkiah's told me. Here's t' wheel back again!

Hilkiah (singing). ' See the conquering hero comes! '

Nancy. I'm so glad to see t' oud bread-winner again.

Arkw. Thou may'st say good-bye to it yonder.

Nancy. Yonder? (*To Margaret.*) Why, wherever's thou goin', lass?

Margt. To Bowton, he tells me.

Nancy. And he's not bought thy hair?

Margt. Ay! It seems he's bought me, lass, hair and hand and all!

Arkw. And heart, too, Margaret?

Margt. Nay! I'll tell thee that when the month's out.

ACT-DROP.

ACT II.

Scene.—*Preston. Room in Richard Arkwright's house, comfortably furnished. Panelled walls. Large door, C. Fireplace, L. Armchair beside it, in which Peter is seated, smoking. Street-door, 1st E. L. Window 1st E. R. and up R. C.*

Margt. (looking in teapot by the chest of drawers) Four guineas yesterday, and only three to-day! Dick would never have taken it without telling me. Can father have gotten to his weary machinery again and found out my hiding-place? I thought he was cured of that since we

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came hither. I must watch him—oh, dear!— oh, dear! I hoped that was all at an end. (*Shouts without.*) What's that, father, dear?

Peter. Some o' t' electioneerers—General Burgoyne's mob, I'll be bound. The less brains the more blether.

Margt. (looking out of window) Nay, they're not the General's colours. I pinned the rosette on Dick's coat before he went out to vote this morning. (*Shouts without.*) Hark!

Peter. Drunk!

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Margt. Savage drunk—not happy.

Peter (rising and looking out). I see. It's the Jennyers from Blackburn.

Margt. The Jennyers!

Peter. The chaps that are going about smashing all the Hargreaves frames wi' more than sixteen spindles. Well for poor Hargreaves they don't smash him as well as his frames.

Margt. Poor Hargreaves! The people he's thrown out o' work have another name for him.

Peter. Nay, nought's bad enough for him. Hasn't he invented a machine to save men's muscles and double their gains?

Margt. Ah, what thou wert so set on once, father, before thou cam'st here to be happy with me and Dick. But that's all over now, isn't it? Thou canst take thy ease in the chimney-corner, and smoke thy pipe and chat to me, instead o' wasting thy life in thy garret among those weary wheels we brought from Leigh.

Peter. Aye, aye—I am wiser now. No more work o' that sort for Peter Hayes.

Margt. For all Dick gave thee yon room (*pointing to door, R.*) to store them in, just like the one he keeps for himself (*points to door, C.*) here ——

Peter. And keeps locked—eh, Maggie? Some twelve months' wives wouldn't much fancy a husband having a lockup place of his own.

Margt. Some wives have husbands that can't be trusted.

Peter. But that's not thy Dick?

Margt. No, father, that's not my Dick!

Peter. And thou'st been his wife all this while, and never peeped! ——

Margt. Never, and don't mean to, till he gives me leave.

Peter. Nor asked what he locks up the room for?

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Margt. Nay, what need to ask? Isn't it the passage to the old schoolhouse? Besides, hasn't he the secrets of his craft—the dyes he sells for the wig-makers? It's such a growing business. You know he hardly cuts, or shaves, or dresses hair at all now.

Peter. And I'll be bound it's hair-dyes that's taken him out o' late, hours and hours at a time?

Margt. A man must keep up his connexion. Hasn't he to meet and drink with his customers—from all the towns for miles and miles about?

Peter. Men-customers, think'st thou?

Margt. What should women-customers want with him?

Peter. Or he with them either. Nay, how should I know? Hair-dyeing, hair-buying—it seems but womanish kind of work altogether. But if only thou'rt satisfied, let him have half the lasses' heads i' Preston through his hands and welcome, for me.
[Comes down.]

Margt. Nay, father. I'll hear no more such talk. I've my marketing to look after. Nothing like brisk wife's work to drive away silly wench's fancy! Make thyself easy about me and Dick; we'll none fight over a locked door while there's an open heart between us.

[Exit door L.]

Peter. She's a chip o' the old block. It's hard to move her, but I'll manage it yet—open heart, locked door— quotha? The one's true enough, whatever the other is. (Goes

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*and tries lock of door, C.) Locked, always locked! He takes good care I never get a peep; but I can see through more than a half-inch planking. Yes, I'd swear it —by the odds and ends of his talk, while he's tried to pick my brains—the way he's followed leads I've given him—a thousand things I can read if nobody else can—as sure as two and two makes four, Richard Arkwright's head's running on roller-spinning. He's in my grooves! [If he has kept me out of his shop, I'm well-nigh sure he's had one look too many into mine.] That room he gave me so kindly—to house my models—that key he put into my hands so handsomely! Like an old fool, I never thought to change the lock, till he had had time to steal my notions [and master my machine. I see now why he was so mighty ready to give my models house room]. But I'll be even with him yet, long-headed as he is. I've sown some seed already that grows apace. (*Chuckling.*) They don't like machine- inventors in Preston any more than they did i' Leigh, and*

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the lads here are brisker than there, and think less o' smashin' man or model. (*During the speech he has lighted his pipe at fire.*) (*A knock.*) Come in, whoever you are.

Enter Hilkiah and Nancy.

Nancy. Eh! if it isn't Mr. Hayes!

Peter. Humph! Hilkiah Lawson and Nancy Hyde.

Nancy. Lawson, if you please, Mr. Hayes—this twelve-month gone. (*Sighs.*)

Peter. Another pair o' fools, eh?

Nancy. Not a pair, I hope. I don't complain, if Hilkiah's satisfied.

Hilkiah. For better, for worse—till death do us part.

Peter. But what brings you to Preston?

Nancy. Hilkiah's got a writing clerkship at Lawyer Ainsworth's, and now we are a bit settled, as he was coming here on business I thought I'd call and see Maggie. What a nice snug place she's got! (*Looks about*)

Hilkiah. While Nancy talks over old times with you I can make my note for th' bill o' sale.

Peter. A bill o' sale here?

Hilkiah. [They're considered office secrets.] But I don't feel to like Mr. Arkwright so much—Nancy's hair an't scarce grown again yet—that you shouldn't know he's raising the wind on his furniture and effects.

Peter. Oh, he is, is he? Do you know what for, Hilkiah?—his wife's father has a right to ask.

Hilkiah. I don't know rightly, but master did let out something about his being on the fool's errand that turns so many heads hereabouts just now.

Peter. What's that?

Hilkiah. Machining—(*checking himself*)—I ask pardon.

Peter. Nay, never mind; happen I've grown wiser now. But if thou could'st find out for me what Arkwright's after, mayhap I could turn him from this wild-goose chase back to his [lawful] business.

Hilkiah (aside). A nice dog you'd be to lead a blind man! (*To Peter.*) I'll tell you aught I can learn and welcome. But Arkwright's mighty close, and so's Mr. Ainsworth. But I must get about my job. (*Makes a list of articles*)

Nancy. Eh, but Maggie should be a happy woman, with all so well up and so comfortable about her—and here's the

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old wheel, I declare! I thought she'd never part wi' that! I'll be bound her husband's one o' t' right sort.

Peter. Handsome is that handsome does.

Nancy. To take you in, as if you'd been his own flesh and blood!

Peter. Aye; there's few who would have cumbered their house-place with a queer, cranky, oud hunks like Peter Hayes. Is that what thou means?

Nancy. Nay, but a father-in-law's a father-in-law! And here you are wi' your pipe and your place in the chimneycorner, and a comfortable cushion to your back.

Peter. Aye, aye; Dick takes the best o' care o' me—a wonderful son-in-law is Dick Arkwright.

Nancy. Ah, they may well say, 'Neighbours' tongues for nagging.' Since we came to Preston we've heard things we didn't just like about Arkwright, haven't we, Hilkieh?

Peter. Things against son-in-law Dick? Whatten sort o' things, lad—whatten sort?

Hilkieh. That he was the sort o' chap to make his butter out o' other folks' churns.

Peter. Who doesn't, lad—who doesn't?

Hilkieh. And not likely to be over-particular, if aught fell in his way, who's earmark it carried.

Peter. Ah, they said that, did they? (*Aside.*) My seed's sprouted!

Nancy. Hout! folks will talk; but if only Maggie's happy——

Peter. She'll be here to answer for herself—(*aside*)—It's time for my gill o' ale. Nought like the tap for sowing prate-seed.

Hilkieh. I've a writ to serve a few doors down. If you'll allow me I'll go along with you, and so combine business with pleasure.

Peter. Which dost call pleasure, lad—my company or writ-sarvin'? [*Exit.*

Nancy (*examining furniture*). Right down honest oak, every bit on't, and not an inch on't but I could see to curl my hair in! She must be a happy woman.

Enter Margaret.

Margt. Nancy!

Nancy. Maggie! (*Embracing.*)

Margt. I met Hilkieh. He's told me the news. And so we're to be neighbours.

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Nancy. Aye, lass—who'd a-thought it?

Margt. An old friend was all I wanted! Why, to have thee here will be like bringing dear old Leigh to Preston. And how bonny thou art looking. Sit, lass, sit.

Nancy. I vow thy cheeks are rounder and thine eye brighter than the last time I saw thee.

Margt. To think we were both wenches then?

Nancy. Aye, lass. Lord! what a twelvemonth can do!

Margt. It can make a great deal of happiness.

Nancy. Aye, can it! if only a woman gets the right side of her husband.

Margt. Which side is that?

Nancy. The blind side, to be sure.

Margt. The blind side? Nay, I should always like to live full and fair in my husband's sight, and he in mine.

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Nancy. Ah, but how would he like it, lass? Depend on't, we must all have our secrets, married or single. There's little thoughts and little corners a woman likes to keep to herself, or a man either.

Margt. Yes, I know. (*Sighs and puts off her things.*)

Nancy. And now thou must show me all over thy place. I've seen this room. (*Up to C. door.*) What's in here?

Margt. That's locked.—it's Dick's room.

Nancy. Locked—oh, ho! What? Dick has his little corners, has he?

Margt. Yes.

Nancy. But thou keeps the key o't?

Margt. No.

Nancy. I never allowed Hilkiah a key, but I've another.

Margt. Dick never offered me one.

Nancy. Anyhow, thou'st been inside the door?

Margt. Never. (*Proudly.*) Dost think I'd ask?

Nancy. The more reason he should offer. Maggie, lass, I don't so much like this. And now I look at thee, I fear me there's more between thee and thy husband than this locked door.

Margt. (*bursting out*) There is, Nancy, there is! Oh, I'm so glad I've thee to tell all to at last! I've let on to no one—not even to father. I've held my heart in so hard! I thought it would burst sometimes! He's good, lass—he's loving—none better—none kinder: but he doesn't trust me as a wife should be trusted. He's never told me why that door is always locked; why, day after day, and almost every

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day of late, he leaves me for times and times, and when he's at home he'll often sit silent the hour together. I can see his thought is far away, but he never asks *me* to share it; and when I ask him, he puts me off with a kiss and a kind word, as if a hungry heart could be staid wi' *them*. And, worst of all—come closer, lass—only last week I had a terrible dream that he was taken from me. I sobbed myself awake, and his place i' the bed beside me was empty and cold. I got up, all i' the dark; I listened, I held my breath, I don't know how long, till at last I heard the key turn in the house-door lock. It was my husband come back as secretly as he had gone.

Nancy. And thou wert not out at him like a blast o' lightning?

Margt. I pretended to sleep, and swallowed down my sorrow.

Nancy. Thou shouldst have had it out with him there and then! Nought like catching a man i' the act. Hast thou told thy father?

Margt. He guesses something. He has said as much. I wish he hadn't—he has put thoughts into my head—of other women.

Nancy. Then tak' my word for 't: have it out with thy husband before thou'rt a day older. A jealous thought's like leaven—(*comes up to her*)—a thumb-nail breadth o't is enough to sour two lives. Tak' my advice, lass.

Margt. I'll try; but it seems so hard to own one's distrust; I wish it were harder to feel it!

Nancy. Where is thy husband now?

Margt. How should I know? (*Crosses to R.*) Away to vote, he said, but I know that's not all. Oh, its rarely he tells me the secret of his comin's and goin's.

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Nancy (C.). Then when he comes home, lass, do thou tackle him—tackle him wi' thy woman's tongue; and if he stands that, try thy woman's tears. (*Kisses her.*) I never knew the man's heart yet that didn't wash soft. And now I must be looking after our Hilkiah. This Preston seems a desperate dangerous place for young married chaps. [*Exit.*

Margt. I will follow her counsel. I'll no longer bear this wall between me and my husband. But if I force his secret, only to come on knowledge that's worse to bear! That money I've missed of late; I don't think father can have taken it; and what should Dick want it for that his wife should not know? Ah, my husband!

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Enter Arkwright, wearing rosette (buff and blue).

Arkw. Well, Maggie, lass.

[*Kisses her; puts off rosette.*

Margt. I'm right glad to see thee back, Dick. Hast voted?

Arkw. Aye; and had a shake from the General's own hand, and a compliment to boot. To be sure, they come cheap enough at election-time.

Margt. Cheap as they are, I should like to hear it.

[*Sits on stool beside him.*

Arkw. Says the General, 'They tell me, Master Arkwright—'

Margt. He knew thy name?

Arkw. Happen one o' the committee whispered it. 'They tell me you've a rare secret for dyeing hair. I'm glad to see you don't turn it to dyeing ribbons,' and he pointed to my rosette. 'No,' says I; 'as long as 'tis the Burgoyne buff and blue, I'll never say die.' So with that they all laughed.

Margt. It was smartly said, and like my Dick. (*Reproachfully.*) But you let them keep you to drink!

Arkw. Only one glass to the General's luck, and then I came away.

Margt. Thou'st been a long time coming from the Granby.

Arkw. I came round about, not to cross the Blackburn mob. They've wrecked a good thousand pounds' worth at John Holt's mill, and now they are bound for the Burnleys—after the new frames they set up there last week. The fools—fighting their own best friends!

Margt. Dost thou mean the Burnleys?

Arkw. No; the machines, lass. When will our lads be sharp enough to see a man's place is on the box, not in the shafts; that it's easier to drive the coach than to draw it?

Margt. Thou hast learned that o' father.

Arkw. Thy father's head's longer than most.

[*Seeks in his pockets for light to his pipe; finds letter; reads it. Margaret watches him, then draws near. Pause.*

Margt. What's that thou art studying so hard?

Arkw. I was seeking for a light to my pipe, when I fell on this?

Margt. A letter?

Arkw. Nobbut an order for a dozen bottles of assorted dyes, from an Ormskirk firm.

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Margt. Let me see it.

Arkw. He writes a terrible bad fist; thou'dst never be able to mak' it out.

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[Puts it in his pocket.]

Margt. I wish thou would'st let me be more help to thee in thy business.

Arkw. Help to me? Why, how could'st thou better help me than thou dost in thine own wife's place—the home place? Stick to that, Maggie; it's wide enough and to spare for most women.

Margt. Aye, that's always you men's cry. It's with your wives as with your horses—you swear we go best in bearing-reins and blinkers. If you would only give us a little more of our heads sometimes, and let us see a little more daylight——

Arkw. Take my word for it, Maggie, it's best as it is. Leave men the harvest work, and the mill; let the women knead the flour and bake the bread quietly at home.

Margt. Hadn't you better marry one o' the machines you and father talk of—made up of arms to labour for you, and wheels to be wound up at your will, but with no tongue to complain or heart to fret?

Arkw. Why, my lass, what's this?

[Puts pipe down and rises.]

Margt. Nay, is it not rather for me to ask, 'What's this?' These absences I know no cause for; this work I have no part in; these letters I must not read; yon door I must not open; that money I must not seek account of?

Arkw. Maggie!

[Margt. Nay, I can count the guineas go, though I know not on what they are spent; I miss my husband, though I must not seek to stay him; I can see his thoughts are far away, though I must not try to follow them; I can feel there's something or somebody he cares for more than his wife, though I must shut the feeling in my heart till it will be shut there no longer; till it will speak out, as I, thy twelve months' wife, am speaking now!

Arkw. Thou hast thy father's mettle in thee; but the Arkwrights have wills o' their own too. It ill becomes wife to question husband in that style.]

Margt. Between true wife and husband there should be no need of question—only fulness of faith and love that casts out fear.

Arkw. I had thought to choose my own time for speaking.

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But suppose I took thee at thy word—made a clean breast to thee here, and now?

Margt. Thou canst? Thou will'st?

Arkw. I can, and I will, —though how thou'lt take it! Aye, Maggie, it's too true. There is another I care for.

Margt. No, no!

Arkw. That I cared for afore I knew thee; that I never ceased to care for all the while I have known thee; one that's fought wi' thee for the mastery o' my sleeping and waking thoughts.

Margt. And my own husband dares own this to me!

Arkw. It's a clean breast I'm making.

Margt. Who is she?

Arkw. Her name must 'bide a secret a while longer.

Margt. Where is she?

Arkw. Here!

Margt. Here, in Preston?

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Arkw. Here, in this house!

Margt. Dick! Richard Arkwright! Husband!

Arkw. Here—I'll show her to thee.

Margt. He dares not!

[He opens door, brings out machine. While doing so Peter enters and seeing what

Arkwright is about conceals himself, while he watches intently.

Arkw. There she stands, Maggie; thy rival!

[Removing cover from machine.

Margt. A spinning jenny!

Arkw. [Nay, poor Hargreaves has been beforehand wi' thee i' that christening. She has no name yet; my Maggie shall find her one.

Margt. A model, for all the world like one o' poor father's!

Arkw. But with a difference or two. A machine to do by the help of a few spindles and rollers what no wheels and no hands ever did or could do—spin cotton into yarn, long and fine, and strong enough for weft as well as warp.

Margt. But that was just what father used to speak of doing, and spent so much o' his time and money trying to do.

Arkw. Not thy father only, but scores o' keen heads in these Northern parts. Thy father was nearer than most.

Margt. Thou hast seen his models? I thought he never would show them thee?

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Arkw. I never asked his leave to look (*Peter can scarce restrain himself*), poor old chap! He had the right notion o' the distance between the rollers, but he never could get them to work with equal pressure. See, here's th' weight that keeps the rollers together; and see the rollers themselves, the smooth leather sheathing above, and the fluted face below, to turn the loose sliver into an even yarn.] There, Maggie! there's the only rival thou hast had or art ever like to have; and she'll do for thee what never rival did—make thy husband about the biggest man, and thee the grandest lady, in all Lancashire, afore we die.

Margt. Father's dream over again! If I could only believe him!

Arkw. And that's not all [nor the best thou'lt do, my brave spinner. It would be poor work, if for one thou mak'st rich thou bring'st not bread and blessing to a thousand. Aye, Maggie,] not more surely were all the world's great oaks hid in the first little acorn, than mighty industries, such as Lancashire does not dream of, lie hid in this poor working model!

Margt. Father's dream; nay, all but father's words! If it should be but to end as his dream ended! [Husband, forgive me if my heart cannot be glad with thine.

Arkw. Not glad, Maggie? Not glad that thy husband's thought has prospered and come to this good end? Not glad to find a rival in wood and iron, instead of flesh and blood?

Margt. Nay; methinks I'd sooner have found a woman within yon door, than this cruel thing that minds me of the misery in my childhood; the suffering and sorrow of the life that thou cam'st to take us from; the blighting of a father's hopes; the ruin of a happy home.]

Arkw. But this is no dream; no half-grasped notion; no half-completed thought. [This is a solid thing, fixed in hard wood and hammered metal; a thing that goes, and

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works, and spins. It was because I knew thy past, thy father's blighted hopes and baffled seekings, that] I kept the secret so long, till the work was done, by stealth, all in the old school-house yonder. There have been times, whiles, when I was hard put to 't to find either spirit or money to carry on. Why, I've pawned my clothes, my watch, without telling thee. I've raised money on our furniture; nay, I've even gone to thy little store in the teapot yonder, without

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thy leave, and more than once, in the desperate stress of my need. But I've brought her through, and there she stands, thy only rival, ready to pay thee back all she cost thee of doubt and fear, by winning thy husband fame and fortune—that he may share them with thee! And yet thou dost not look glad!

Margt. How can I look what I do not feel? Oh, Dick, for mercy's sake do not set thy life on this terrible task! Turn from this doubtful, dreadful game of invention to hard, honest, humble work.

[*Arkw.* As well ask a man who has seen the sun to put up with a rushlight for the rest of his days.

Margt. There it is! Even so it was with father. I've seen him just as confident; just as angry with me not rejoicing with him. I've known his hopes raised just as high, and have felt the ruin when they fell. Man's heart and brain cannot stand the shock—not even thine, strong and springy as they are. This is but a model, and has yet to grow to a machine—to a multitude of machines—ere it does all thou hop'st from it; and where art thou to find the money to set them going? And if thou dost, what's to come of all the wheels and looms and spinners whose work thy machines will tak' away? Must they sit idle and clem?

Arkw. Why, thou dear little blind buzzard, this will make work for thousands, where there's work for tens now!

Margt. But while the work is making?]

Arkw. I'll hear no more croaking. (*Puts machine in room.*) Look, I can trust thee henceforth? No more locked doors; or if we must lock them against silly spies and prating meddlers, the key shall be in thy keeping. (*Gives her key.*) There, I make thee her gaoler—with that key and this kiss. [Kisses her.

Enter Hilkiah.

Hilkiah. Ah, here he is at last. Eh, Mrs. Arkwright, it's lucky I've found thy husband. Here's a mighty pressing note from our Mr. Ainsworth. (*Gives note to Arkwright, who reads.*) Hark ye, Maggie, what flea hast thou been setting in our Nancy's ear?

Margt. Nay, none that I know of.

Hilkiah. She was down on me like a fire-flaught, tucked me under her arm, and walked me down to the office, as if I'd been a cut-purse in charge of a constable!

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Arkw. Now, lad, I'll come with thee at once. My laced hat, Maggie, and rosette. It's to meet some Nottingham gentlemen at the Granby. I may have good news for thee anon. Good day [little woman], and good hope.

[Exit Arkwright and Hilkiah. Peter Hayes comes forward, pale, hands clenched, trembling in every limb.]

Margt. Father! you here?

Peter. Aye, I'm here!

Margt. What's the matter?

Peter. The matter! I've been here, all the while thy husband was showing thee that—that thing—in there. That's the matter! Give me that key!

Margt. Nay, father, Dick trusted it to me; I can only give it with his leave——

Peter. His leave? Did he wait for *mine* to use *my* key? The sly, smooth, behind-backs rogue!

Margt. Whom dost thou mean, father?

Peter. This Richard Arkwright! this villain! this thief!

Margt. I must not hear such words used of my husband.

Peter. Not strong enough, aren't they? Find me stronger and I'll use them! The key, lass, that I may find out all he has robbed me of!

Margt. Father, are you mad?

Peter. Not now; I *was*, when I let him pay out the bailiffs; when I laid him on the scent o' my invention; when I brought my models hither, that he might pick and plunder at his will.

Margt. I will not hear my husband ill said; least of all by thee, father, to whom he has been so kind.

Peter. Kind! the black-hearted robber! The key! I tell thee, the key!

Margt. I will not.

Peter. Tak' care! (*Threateningly.*)

Margt. I'm your own bairn, I've your own blood in my veins. You may tear the key from my dead hand, but while I've life to keep it, keep it I will!

Peter. Nay, then, I will bring those to thee that shall need no key. The Blackburn Jennyers are in the town! Think of what they did for Kay and Hargreaves! They have sworn the next time they turn out they will not stop with *machines*! Have a care for thy precious Dick, lass; if they fall in with him, see if thy love can save him then.

[Exit Peter Hayes.]

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Margt. Bring the Blackburn mob upon us! What had I best do? Oh, Lord guide me! This is terrible. I wished ill to his invention, but that it should come so sudden! Shall I warn Dick to shift his model? But where to find him? Is there time? Will father be as bad as his threat, angry as he is? Will they be my husband's best friends that stand between his model and the mob? I should feel proud of his work, but how can I, who have so often seen the blank end of hopes as fair? It is a will-o'-the-wisp he is following, that must end him in slough and sorrow. What if those desperate men come but to make him a short, sharp deliverance from what I know will be *his* ruin, as it was father's? (*A knock.*) Who's there?

Hilk. (without) Me, Mrs. Arkwright, Hilkiah Lawson.

Margt. (opens) Hilkiah!

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Hilk. (enters) Where's thy master?

Margt. I've not seen him since he left with thee.

Hilk. Let's hope he's 'scaped them.

Margt. 'Scaped? Whom?

Hilk. The Jennyers! If they catch him, Lord ha' mercy on his limbs! And if they come here, Lord ha' mercy on the furniture!

Margt. But thou'lt stand by me?

Hilk. Aren't we both from Leigh, and isn't thou a woman? But I can't carry all this solid oak on my back, as I could thy wheel.

Margt. Never mind the furniture.

Hilk. I'm bound to; we've got a bill o' sale on't at our office.

[*Distant roar of mob.*]

Margt. Hark!

Hilk. Those Blackburn devils! Better try and find your husband, and warn him.

Margt. I might set the mob on his track.

Hilk. Better they should have it out with him in the street, where there'll be nought there to smash except himself. [*Cries of mob, nearer.*]

Mob. No machines! Down with the jennies! Break and burn!

Margt. (at window) They passed the house before today; perhaps they'll pass again. Father never can have told them. [*Yells repeated outside.*]

Jack o' Dicks (outside, C.). Open t' door. —

Bob o' Chowbent. Or we'll open it for ye.

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Hilk. Hast ere a weapon handy?

Margt. Father's old gun.

[*The yells are repeated.*]

Hilk. 'Twould be more danger to us than them.

Dick. Now, you inside there!

Margt. Here's none but a helpless, harmless woman.

Hilk. That's right, sink *me*, for I daren't shoot.

Bob. We'll none harm a woman; open t' door.

Nancy (outside). Do nou't o' t' sort, Maggie.

Hilk. There's our Nance among them, contradictin' as usual.

Bob Haud thou thy blether, or I'll mak' thee!

Hilk. You'd best try!

Dick. Open t' door, lass!

Peter. Open, Margaret, to thy father.

Margt. I will not. This is my master's house; I'll hold it against all.

Nancy. That's right; give it 'em hot, lass!

Margt. Ruffians and robbers as you are!

Nancy. Robbers is too good for them!

Dick. Throttle t' wench, and forward wi' sledges! Now wi' a will, lads! — once, twice, thrice! (*Sledges are used against the door.*) Now tak' breath!

Hilk. I can't do any good. It'll only vex 'em to talk law. I'd better get in somewhere (*tries cupboard*), or under summat. (*Gets under table.*) But if they offer thee any harm I'll be out on them!

[*Withdraws.*]

Dick. Now lads, another rouser! once, twice, thrice!

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[Door is burst open. Enter Bob and Dick, heading a mob of desperadoes armed with clubs, sledges, and pieces of machinery; followed by Peter Hayes and Nancy, held by two men.]

Margt. Are you men? Are you Englishmen? (*Confronts them.*) Here I stand—one woman to a mob of cowards. What do you want here?

Dick. This new jenny o' thy man's mak'—another gim-crack thrust between honest folks and their bread.

Peter. It's in that room (*points*); she's got the key.

Nancy. For shame o' thyself, Peter Hayes.

Dick. Come, missus, hand over.

Bob. Thou will not? Nay, then, out wi' master key!

[Bob and another go up, smash C. door open, and fetch out machine. Bob raises hammer, about to smash it.]

Margt. (rushes forward) Stop! There stands my husband's work; you are here to destroy it.

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Dick. Aye, are we, as we have smashed such devil's gins all t' country round. We'll none of such whirligigs, to do man's work and throw out man's labour.

Margt. And what am I but a labourer like yourselves—one o' the hand-spinners those cranks and rollers will undo? There stands my wheel. (*Points to it.*) No lass in Leigh or Preston has worked harder or earned more at hand-spinning than I have. No lass in Leigh or Preston either better knows the curse invention brings to the inventor and his home. Have I not prayed my master but now, as I have prayed my father for years, to turn from these things—to leave Lancashire to the warp and weft that was good enough for our fathers, and to the old wheel and shuttle on which our hands were most at home?

Mob (murmurs). She's reet.

Bob. Curse me, but thou talkest like a book.

Dick. Or like a man; that's more to the purpose.

Margt. But none the more will I see this wondrous work of my master's brain and hand—the thing he has made and loved—that's been to him as a bairn—that may well be more to him than a wife—smashed by those that wish as little good to him as to his work. I will not see the home-placed wrecked, where he has wrought at his trade, where we have been so happy, where he had made a home for this old man (*points*) who hounded you on. Shame on him, though he were ten times my father!

Mob (groans and murmurs).

Bob. Enough said; now for smashin'! (*Raises his hammer to smash the machine.*)

Margt. Hold! Better, if his work must be destroyed, it should be by my hands! Give me the hammer! (*Wrests hammer from Bob.*) Oh, husband! this will be a heavy blow for thee! but it was the one that loved thee best that struck it! (*Smashes machine.*)

Nancy. Hold thy hand, lass! he'll never forgive thee!

[Mob shout exultingly.]

Margt. (throwing down hammer) Oh, what have I done? What have I done?

Dick. Our work, lass. Let's spare the place for her sake.

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Bob. Thou'st saved thy man's gear, and done a good deed for Lancashire. But let Dick Arkwright set up one of his devil's frames again, and we'll limb him as well as his work!

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Dick. Now, lads! down to Bremley Clough! Armstrong's gettin' six new twenty-spindle frames that want our sledges to set 'em goin'.

[*Mob exit shouting and yelling. Hilkiah emerges from under table.*]

Nancy (seeing him). Hilkiah, thou wast here all the time, and never wagged hand or tongue?

Hilk. I thought that wasn't wanted, wi' thee here.

Nancy. This'll be a sorry sight for Richard Arkwright.

Hilk. Lucky it warn't included in bill o' sale.

Nancy. Maggie, lass, I fear me thou hast done a bad day's work!

Margt. Oh, Nance, Nance! 'Twas in my heat of blood! Father, it was thou that brought them hither. How ever shall I face my husband? Is this the end of all his labours—all his hopes?

Peter. His labours! his hopes! And what o' mine, lass—what o' mine?

Arkw. (outside) It's all right—it's all right! (*Enters.*) Maggie, thank God thou'rt safe! Nought wrecked here! I'm all of a tremble. I saw the Blackburn lads turn out o' the street as I came in. I feared they had got sight o' my bonny bairn in yonder, and just as I had settled to set her to work for the Nottingham gentleman. Lord forgive me! I hardly know if I thought of thee or her first, Maggie. (*Nancy, Hilkiah, and Margaret have been standing in front of the wreck. On moving Nancy aside discovers the destruction.*) Almighty God! dost thou see this? My life's work a wreck! (*Falls prostrate beside it.*) Villains! oh, curse ——

Peter. Nay, best know whom thou'rt cursing, that thou may'st curse home. This was none of the Blackburn boys' doing.

Arkw. Whose, then?

Peter. Mine and hers. Thou hast robbed me, and I have but done with my own after my own fashion. But with her help though, if that mak's it any better to bear.

Arkw. My wife's?

Peter. Even so.

Arkw. Maggie! Speak, lass! But it's not true. The old man's crazed with fright or dazed with drink. Speak, lass, and give him the lie, father as he is. Dost thou hear? he says it is thou who hast done this!

Margt. He says true.

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Arkw. True? Margaret Arkwright, dost thou know what thou'rt saying?

Margt. He says true. It was my hand that wrecked thy work. But, oh, husband! 'twas in love I did it, to take the deed out of less loving hands. I think I thought—if I thought at all—but it all comes back to me like a dream—the shock of this might stay thee, might turn thy mind from thy invention back to quiet life and common life's work; but, oh, husband! there was love in it all—there was love in it all!

Arkw. Woman!—for I can call thee wife no longer—

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Margt. No, no! Richard! Husband! Master! do not look at me with those cold, cruel eyes!

Arkw. Henceforth our ways in life must lie apart! (*Throws her off.*) Old man! this is no home henceforth for thee or her !

TABLEAU.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

Scene.—*Birkacre Clough. A picturesque ravine. New mill, R. Cottage in the distance. Practical bridge, R. C. Charity school children, country lasses, workmen, and village lads with flags discovered. Ale-cask, R. Bank set at foot of bridge; another ditto, R. I E. Nancy marshalling the children, & c. Hilkieah studying programme of proceedings; all cheering; lively music as curtain rises.*

Hilkieah. There —there, lads! It's all very gratifying, but there's a saying in law, never leap until you come to the stile; keep your breath and your beer for the right moment, or when it comes you may find you've nought left i' craw or cask. Now, Nancy—I mean Mrs. Lawson—hast thou got those loppets o' school bairns to know right hand from left?

Nancy. Bless the man! I've stuck every one a cake i' one fist and a flower i' t' other, and they can all read cake-hand and flower-hand.

Hilkieah. That's practical. Now, Joe Higgins, you tak' t' flagmen and band down to th' last turn o' Bolton Road, and don't let 'em show till you see Sir Richard's carriage.

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Nancy. And mind, Joe, you don't start too soon wi' your blastin' and blarin', for Sir Richard'll be drivin' his own four the last stage, and they be spirited cattle.

Hilkieah. Jim o' Lankey's, thou see the ale-cask trundled down to the triumphal arch; it's there I want most enthusiasm, and naturally you'll want most beer. Come, Nancy, get school bairns started. (*Ale-cask taken off.*)

Nancy. Now, honies! 'Tention! —o'cake-hand—march. (*Exeunt children.*) Now, you lasses wi' posies—now, you lads wi' flags. (*School girls, country lasses, men, & c. march off in rough order.*) They're off at last! (*She fans herself*) I'm all in a muck o' sweat!

Hilkieah. In an advanced state of perspiration, you mean, my dear; sweat's all very well for mill hands, but nothing short of perspiration for the lady of Hilkieah Lawson, Esquire, attorney-at-law, Under-Sheriff for the Southern Division of the county of Lancashire.

[*Takes snuff.*]

Nancy. Wi' Sir Richard Arkwright, Knight, High Sheriff o' the county! And eighteen years ago thou wert sweepin' out lawyer Ainsworth's office, and he was scrapin' chins for a penny the shave! It's enough to mak' a body sweat.

[*Fanning herself.*]

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Hilkiah. That's your weak point, my dear—I mean one of your weak points—if you have one; you don't meet the chances and changes of this mortal life coolly enough. Depend on't, my rule is the right one. Take all good luck as if you expected it, or folks will never think you've earned it. And if ever there was a man that's earned every stroke of luck that's come to him, from the first day he scraped a chin till this day that he comes back from London, it is Sir Richard Arkwright, knighted by the King's own hand, pricked for High Sheriff, partner in a dozen mills in the three counties, and the first master spinner in Lancashire—which is about all one as to say i' the world, I reckon.

Nancy. Ah! If it wasn't for the thought of poor Maggie! He was too hard to her, Hilkiah. Don't you tell me—if he was here now I'd say so to his face, for all he's gone up like a lad's kite, and we after him like t' tail.

Hilkiah. It's a comfort to know that tails are useful to kites. In fact, they can't fly without them. [But here come Justices.]

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Enter Sir Richard Clayton, Mr. Omerod, Haworth, Chadwick, *saluting* Mr. and Mrs. Lawson, (U. E. L.

Sir Rich. Mrs. Lawson, your most humble servant; as blooming as ever.

[Crosses to R.

Nancy. Get out wi' your nonsense, Sir Richard.

Sir Rich. Well, Mr. Lawson, this is a great day for Birkacre. (*The others cross to Nancy and converse with her.*) Quite a concatenation of excitements. The starting of the new weaving-shed (*pointing to mill*), with all Arkwright's latest improvements, and the welcome home of the new Knight.

Chad. For my part, I don't much fancy another Sir Richard on our Bench.

Sir Rich. Nay, I protest, Arkwright has quite as good, if not quite as old, a title to the handle as I have.

Chad. More's the pity.

Sir Rich. We must all have a start. Methinks the Claytons were no more than the Chadwicks once; and if the King likes to knight a cotton-spinner, why, the King can do no wrong, you know. That's good Tory doctrine.

Hilkiah. And Mr. Chadwick has the comfort of feeling he has tried his best to prevent it.

Chad. I don't quite understand you, Mr. Lawson?

Hilkiah. By trying, with Mr. Haworth here and the rest of the Master Cotton-Spinners' Association, to break down his patents, and eat up his profits in law!

Chad. And didn't Mr. Justice Bullar declare he'd not a leg to stand on?

Hilkiah. He's gone on uncommon well without one.

Chad. And as to his right to profits—wasn't it clearly proved that his inventions, as he called them, were all pickings out of other people's brains—poor old Hayes's, for instance?

Nancy (aside). Ah, poor Maggie!

Chad. If all had their rights—

Hilkiah (interrupting). There'd be many big folks who'd look uncommon small before Richard Arkwright.

Chad. Humph! birds of a feather! Others have risen besides the Bolton barber.

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Nancy. Meaning our Hilkiah? Aye, Mr. Chadwick, while there's such a deal o' fools to fling away their brass at law, it's well there's a wise man here and there to pick't up.

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Hilkiah (aside). One for his nob from our Nance!

[*Distant shouts.*

Sir Rich. Where's the address, Lawson? (*Hilkiah looks for it.*) Gentlemen, we shall do ourselves most credit by receiving our High Sheriff handsomely. May I have the the honour, Mrs. Lawson——

[*Offering his arm to Nancy.*

Nancy. Nay the honour's o' my side, Sir Richard. But I'll bide beside Hilkiah. If he wanted a word, there's nobody could gie't him as well as me.

Sir Rich, (bowing) A model wife! (*To Chadwick.*) Come, Chadwick; best forget all about Justice Bullar's judgment and the Bolton shaving-shop.

[*Exeunt over bridge Clayton, Chadwick, Omerod, and Haworth.*

Hilkiah (takes out MS. of his address and studies it). I shall have five minutes to spare for a squint.

[*Cheering renewed.*

Nancy. They're they go! He's at turn o' t' road now. (*Reflectingly.*) Eh, if poor Maggie had but been here to see this day, Hilkiah! I wonder how she's living?

Hilkiah. With her old father, na doubt. It's under cover to him I've always paid her over the very handsome allowance Sir Richard makes her.

Nancy. Handsome! and I'll be bound best part o' t' goes to that mad swallow-hole o' a father. What dost think last news I heard o' him? —that he'd gotten started a sort of a show—o' sun, moon, and stars.

Hilkiah. An orrery, I daresay——

Nancy. Happen 'twas some such rubbish! and that he was trampin' country side wi' 't, and draggin' poor Maggie after him, I'll be bound. She'd never leave him, I know; she was hard whiles, but as true as steel—she'd *that* o' the Hayeses. (*Cheering repeated R.*) Hark! Come, Hilkiah, they've gotten to triumphal arch. [*Loud cheering, R. H.*

Hilk. Yes, that's the beer! I must take my place wi' the gentlemen o' the Bench, to read their address —my own composition.

Nancy. Nobbut tak' care o' thy stops; and mind, thy wife's listenin' to thee!

[*Exeunt R. I E.*

MUSIC.

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Enter over bridge Peter Hayes and Margaret, followed by a boy with box over his shoulder. They look weary and travel-stained.

Peter. Now, lass! we've had a het trudge from Chorley. Rest thee a bit here under t'birken shaw i' the cool o' the beck; and thou, lad, carry t' orrery into village (*Margaret sits on stone at foot of bridge, dreamily*), to King's Arms, and hire us two rooms for th' neet, and put one o' my show-bills up i' th' tap, and say, Peter Hayes is coMin' after, wi' his wonderful machinery o' the heavenly bodies that goes by clockwork.

[*Exit boy over bridge.*

Margt. What's the name of the place, feyther?

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Peter. Birkacre.

Margt. It's a winsome spot, with the bright beck wimplin' down the clough, and the pretty slender birch-trees swingin' their fair green branches over the dark pools, like bonny lasses, that love to see in the looking-glass how they look wi' their loosened hair.] Dost know this place, father?

Peter. What foot o' Lancashire, Derbyshire, and Nottinghamshire but the sole o' Peter Hayes' clogs has ta'en a measure o't?

Margt. Ah, you were tramping them all those weary years I staid at home i' Leigh. It was sadder there, sitting by myself, with my hands in my lap, always thinking and thinking, and waiting for what never came [than out here wi' thee, under the open sky, footing the wild roads that wind on and on across moor and marsh, through clough and over edge, as if they'd never come to an end. It was end— end—nothing but end yonder i' Leigh.] But still I've thee to look after. A woman must have something she loves to spend her care upon.

Peter. Aye, thou's been a good daughter to me—better than afore yon—

[*Margaret rises from stone, goes to Peter, and lays her hand on his shoulder.*

Margt. Don't, father! It's sore looking back for both of us!

[*Peter.* Sore, is it? I like nought so well. The Hayeses have long memories. There's debts I like to keep fresh i' mind, and scores I mun' go on reckonin', over and over, till the time comes to wipe 'em out.

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Margt. I know—I know. [I've heard so much of that kind of talk, and I'm so weary of it.] But thou'st not told me the name o' this place?

Peter. Birkacre—[I told thee afore.]

[*Margt.* I had forgotten.]

Peter. There's that about it for *thee* to know it by, above all. See'st thou yon grand house o't hill-side yonder (*points off R.*) and this big bright bran-new mill that looks down on t' clough and village, as much as to say, 'Come, thou bonny beck, and turn my wheels [and wash the dirt out o' my yarns], And *you*, men and women and bairns, bring your fresh springs o' life, the strong thews and sinews o' your prime, and the aches and pains o' your old age, that I may spin them into water-twist, and turn all alike into money for my master !

[*Crosses R.*

Margt. Nay, father! Methinks I hear another song and a sweeter. I hear the mill-wheel whisper to the beck, 'Why should thy bright waters run to waste? Let me find cranks and beams for them to turn, as they spin and weave the white yarn, and set busy hands to work [far, far away, on Indian isles and American savannahs!] Methinks I hear *my* mill-bell, not harsh and hateful like thine, sounding its call to prayer—for is not labour prayer?— and rousing the village to a hard but honest day's work for a fair day's wage. Yes, father [I've not looked on all these years for nought; I've watched how things were going about us—even as he said they would]. I've learned to find a sweetness in the mill-bell now that I could not find in earlier days.

Peter. I think it would scarce sound so sweet if thou knew'st whose house yon is—who owns these mills!

Margt. Who?

Peter. Richard Arkwright.

Margt. (*starting up*) My husband!

The Salamanca Corpus: Arkwright's Wife (1873)

Peter. Aye, lass! thy husband, who leaves thee and thy father to tramp for bread while he battens on the inventions he stole from *me*!

Margt. These mills my husband's? But we've come on others you told me were his, already.

Peter. Aye, lass. He's too knowin' a chap to risk all his eggs i' one basket: he plants his frame-sheds here and there, as he finds water-power handy, roads convenient, labour in his reach, and capital at command: and there's no lack o' partners,

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for Dick has the reet knack that makes money breed money. He ever had, from the day he paid the bailiffs out o' our house at Leigh, that he might repay himself a thousand and a thousand times out o' my foolish brains, that I left him free to unlock wi' his own key—and be d——to him!

Margt. Again, father! (*Starts up angrily, but checks herself.*) The old fancy, that I am weary of gainsaying! Oh, if thou could'st but give thy enemy his due!

Peter. I do give him his due—don't I hate him? And as thou'st thy father's bairn, I hoped, ere this, thou'd'st ha' come to hate him too. The one pleasant thought I brought away from Preston was o' thee smashin' his model! Ha! ha! ha! that was rare fun!

Margt. Oh, father! do not turn my thought to that wretched day and wicked deed. [Thou see'st there was a higher power at his back; he was working for good—the good of Lancashire—of England—of the world—and he saw it afar off, though I could not]. In my madness I destroyed his work, and yet see what it and he have grown to, and to what thou and I have fallen. [*Distant shouts and cheering.*]

Peter. [Working for good, was he?] Wait a bit! Thou could'st not kill the seed, 'tis true: let's see if I cannot destroy the harvest. Poor old Peter Hayes may be man enow to pull down lusty Dick Arkwright yet—and the higher the fall the heavier.

Margt. What do you mean, father? [*Cheering renewed.*]

Peter. I'll tell thee as we go along. (*Enter over bridge one or two women and a boy, forerunners of crowd shouting.*) This way: best give the slip to yon noisy crowd. (*To boy.*) Say, lad, what's yon fules shoutin' for?

Boy. Why, wherever's thou come from, thou old gommock, not to know? It's master come home—Master Arkwright.

Woman (cuffing boy soundly). Say Sir Richard! thou lazy young loppet!

Margt. Sir Richard?

Woman. King George has given him t' title, and he ought to get it from man, woman, and child here i' Birkacre, that he and his water-frames ha' made out o' nout!

Margt. Do you hear, father?

Peter. Aye, I hear.

Margt. And lay to heart?

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Peter. [Aye, lass, and lay to heart!] Come thy ways, I tell thee. [*Exit Peter, 2 E. L.*]

Music, &c., Bells.

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Enter over bridge Nancy, Hilkiah, school-children, country lasses, mill-hands, lads, and men carrying flags, cheering, while the band plays 'See the Conquering Hero', followed by Sir Richard Clayton, Haworth, Chadwick, Sir Richard Arkwright, Omerod, & c., & c.

Arkw. Thank ye, friends—thank you all, kindly. And you, working folks, that I have known longest—come o' the same stock—taught i' the same school—and not one but has the same road before him, if he nobbut keeps clear the hard Lancashire head on his shoulders to guide the strong Lancashire hands! (*Cheers.*) And as for you, gentlemen——

Sir R. Clay. (*shaking hands*) And brother Justices, Sir Richard.

Arkw. You're mighty kind to own me among you worshipful gentlemen of His Majesty's Commission and old county blood. I fear I'll scarce feel as much at home o' the Bench for a while yet, as lookin' after my bonny bit throstles, i' their nests yonder. (*Pointing to mill.*)

Chad. And some of us not only brother magistrates, Arkwright, but brother manufacturers, you know.

Arkw. Aye, Mr. Chadwick. Elder brothers, that have done me elder brothers' service—taught me to look to my own labour for my own living, and to trust my own hands to guard my own head. But let by-gones be by-gones; our bonny North Country is broad enough for all. There's elbow-room for working or fighting either, so the work's above board and the fighting fair.

Chad. Nay, nothing like a clear stage and no favour!

Arkw. *That* I'm sure of. Now, lads and lasses! there's a free tap and fiddlers at the 'King's Arms,' and the merrier you are, the more I shall like it.

Hilkiah. One cheer more for Sir Richard Arkwright!

[*The crowd troop off huzzahing.*]

Arkw. Now, gentlemen, if you'll do me the honour to look over the new shed—you'll find some improved carding machinery, Mr. Chadwick—for all my patents haven't a leg to stand on—and a lot o' new things i' roving gear, Mr.

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Haworth. There's the foreman ready to lead the way. (*Enter from mill the Foreman, and holds gates open.*) And after that there'll be a bit o' dinner at t' Hall, if you'll do me the honour.

Sir Richard. Egad! we must christen the new title! And, luckily, Sir Richard's port is older than his knighthood. Come, gentlemen!

[*Exit into mill Clayton, Chadwick, Haworth, Omerod, & c., & c.*]

Hilkiah. Let's off, Nancy. I'm too much excited for eating and drinking.

[*They are about to go.*]

Arkw. Nay, I can't spare you, old friends. Besides, on such a day I shall want a lady to do the honours at the Hall. (*With a sigh.*)

Nancy (*half-aside*). More's the pity!

Arkw. Thou's right there, lass. Nay, I've quick ears! Aye (*bitterly*), believe it or not, Nancy Lawson—busy and prosperous as I am, wi' more mills than I can manage, more machines buzzin' i' my head than I shall ever gi' shape to, more money than I want, and more honour than sits easy upon me, I sometimes feel I should be thankful to change

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lots wi' the worst-paid spinner that sits i' the poorest o' yon chimney-corners, wi' wife and bairns about him.

Nancy. Aye, home's home!

Arkw. And what home can there be without a wife? (*sighing.*) Thou knows—if only she'd been here to-day!

Enter lad running with a note from L. I E.

Boy (to Arkwright). 'Tis for thee.

Arkw. For me, lad? (*Takes and reads.*) ' Oud shaver.' Free and easy at any rate. 'Look out for sky-scrappers. Them that blazed Rawmarsh mills have a lowe left for Birkacre. There's red-coats at Chorley Barracks. This is a hint from thy friend. Anominous.' Ominous indeed! Who gave it thee, lad?

Boy. A travellin' mak' o' chap I never see here before— chuck'd it ower t' churchyard dyke to me, and a groat, to tak' it to thee straight.

Arkw. Good lad! There's another for doin' thy errand. (*Exit lad, joyfully.*) A hint, eh? I never tak' hints.

Hilkiah. But hadn't you better make inquiry?

Arkw. (tearing up paper) Nay; if I heeded such trumpery I'd never know a night's sleep. [Besides, think

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how Chadwick and Haworth would chuckle if they came to know. No; I must do the honours of the new shed yonder. So I'll e'en leave you. You'll not mind that, I know.

Nancy. Nay, we'll stroll up to the Hall. It's a fine even', and the young birks smell so sweet—it's as good as a posy.

Arkw. And, I say,] Nancy, just thou cast an eye into t' kitchen, and over t' table and things, there's a bonny woman. I've none to do for me, thou knows, nobbut t' housekeeper. (*Mastering his feelings.*) There, what's use i' frettin'? I don't often; but somehow the thought of *her* will keep coming back to-day. [*Exit into mill.*

Nancy. Ah! there goes a sad heart—for all the laced waistcoat.

Hilkiah. There's a skeleton i' every cupboard, as the saying is; though we hav'n't set up one yet—and don't mean to (*aside*), I hope.

Enter Margaret, running, L. I E.

Margt. Who are these? Bettermost folks! They must be friends o' his—all here are. Perhaps they'd help me. I beg your pardon, sir. [*They turn; mutual recognition.*

Nancy. Why — nay — Lor' a mercy! Hilkiah! It's niver——

Margt. Nancy! Oh, lass! that I should ha' come on you two!

Nancy (embracing her). Maggie! Eh, but I knew thee, for all thou'st so changed! Thou here, i' this poor plight!

Margt. Never fash wi' me! I've no time now. (*To Hilkiah.*) Thou'st thy home here? (*He nods.*)

Hilkiah. House and office, with appurtenances.

Margt. Hast e'er a trusty man (*he nods*) and a swift horse that'll carry him into Chorley afore nightfall?

Hilkiah. My grey gelding has covered the three miles within the eighteen minutes.

Margt. Then send him off, for the Lord's sake, to bring the dragoons from Chorley Barracks here, as fast as they can ride!

Hilkiah. Dragoons? But what the dickens —

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Margt. (with eagerness) No questions; but do as I tell thee! There's life and death hangs o' the doing!

Hilkiah. The dragoons! They'll none move without a regular magistrate's order.

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Margt. Get one at once! or tell me where to find them that can.

Hilkiah. Nay, if the thing's to be got, I am the man to get it (*tears page from his pocket-book and writes rapidly*). Here lad (*beckons off—lad approaches*), ask Sir Richard—he's in the new shed—to give me his signature on this paper. Say, Mr. Lawson wants it particularly.

[*Exit lad into mill.*]

Margt. Run! lad, run!

Nancy. Is she gone crazed, I wonder?

Hilkiah. What does all this mean?

Margt. It means that but for such swift help as that may bring, before this night is two hours older, Birkacre Mill may be a heap of ashes!

Hilkiah. The new mill burnt!

Nancy. Mercy on us!

Margt. And not Birkacre Mill only! Its blaze is watched for on the hills for ten miles round. 'Twill be the signal for firing every other mill in the three counties that Richard Arkwright has money or machines in!

Hilkiah. Lord defend us! (*Lad enters from mill; takes paper from him, and writes.*) Tell John Allen to ride wi' this to Chorley Barracks as fast as thy grey gelding can lay legs to ground. (*Exit L. U. E.*) And who's at the bottom of this hellish plot?

Margt. Oh, don't ask me that.

Hilkiah. I must know.

Margt. Oh, must I tell?

Hilkiah. Yes, if I'm to trust.

Margt. Woe's me that I should say it!—my father! 'Tis for this that he has guided our journey hither, so that the blow may fall to-day, the birthday of the new mill, [and the new honour. 'Tis a long-planned purpose, though I never knew. He has been a wanderer for years, and still in his wanderings he has laid his train of dark designs and desperate men, chosen secretly, to meet and rise with fire and gunpowder, for the ruin of Richard Arkwright and his inventions. The work is to begin to-night.] Pray Heaven it may be prevented. [Not Richard Arkwright's property only—his life is in danger!]

Hilkiah. Yonder goes John Allen, full gallop.

Margt. The Lord speed him!

Nancy. Thou'lt 'bide with us, Maggie? We've a bed for thee.

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Margt. No rest for me to-night. They'd best be on their guard at the mill.

Nancy. Be off, Hilkiah, and warn them. I'll go bring thee thy blunderbuss from the office.

[*Hilkiah (aside).* A most unprofessional weapon, but these rascals will mind lead more than law. (*Going.*) But if they ask who gave me warning?

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Margt. (struggling with her feelings). Say a poor woman, a poor travelling woman, who wished well to Richard Arkwright, because she thought he had done good to the country.]

Nancy (to Margt.). Thou 'bide till I come back. I'll bring the blunderbuss to thee by the short cut through the garden. [Exit Nancy over bridge; Hilkiah into mill.

Enter Peter Hayes, L. I. E. , jubilant.

Peter. Where's gotten to, lass? It's none wise thou and me should be seen glommerin' about t' mill, wi' what's comin'. (*In a half-whisper.*) The lads are hard at hand, wi' [Black Bob o' Chowbent and Dick o' Rawmarsh, to show 'em t' way. They're nobbut fettlin' up a bit, takin' a drink and a pipe just ower t' 'edge. I've seen Bob; he says the lads are mad for mischief.] We've nobbut to let spring click? [Going.

Margt. Father, if you can lose these desperate men, you can stay them—you must stay them now!

Peter. [Stay them?] Nay. Oud Nick's easier loosened than laid !

Margt. Tell them [Nay, what good to tell *them* the devilry they're upon—not destroying the means of one man, but the bread of thousands—but tell them] they are rushing to their undoing !

Peter. Pshaw! Who's to harm them? [They know nought i' t' mill, master nor overlookers. Birkacre folk are a poor lot, but they'll none turn out for mill or master;] and if they do, our chaps has gotten guns, and Bob's melted all his oud aunt's pewter into bullets, and she left him a rare dresser-full.

Margt. Armed! Then, do what I may, there will be blood spilled yet!

Peter. Never fear; [t' pensioners,'ll be flayed and t' constables will none fight, for all that oud Clayton. There's Chadwick, and Haworth, and a deal o' that mak', will look on wi' a laugh i' their sleeves, justices though they be.]

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There's nobbut t' red-coats could hinder, and they're safe at Chorley, three miles away!

Margt. Do not trust that. They may have had warning.

Peter. Nay, nay, niver.

Margt. [Father, they have had warning.

Peter. T' red-coats? And who's warned them? Bob and Dick ha' kept their chaps i' t' dark. Save them and me, there was none knew t' day and t' deed.

Margt. You told me] — *I* have warned the soldiers.

Peter. Thou? Marget Hayes! My own flesh and blood! [Have a care, lass! I love thee, as thou knowest; what I should do without thee I cannot think, but if thou hast done this, thou'rt no more child o' mine!

Margt. My father casts me off, as my master did eighteen years ago. But 'tis even justice wipes out the score against me. 'Tis for right done now, as it was for wrong done then!]

Peter. But, come, lass, come! Thou says this nobbut to scare me and t' lads? Thou'st none split, Maggie?

Margt. Father or no father—I tell you again, I have sent a swift rider to Chorley Barracks.

Peter (fiercely, then checking himself). Thou hast? Dost know if I let on to yon lads o' this, they'd limb thee as soon as look at thee?

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Margt. Tell them, father; let them do their worst. Better wreak their mad wrath on me than on the mills.

[*R. Loud murmurs off.*

Peter. It's too late, lass. They're here, and red coats isn't. Fire is a swift servant. Happen t' soldiers may come to find white ash and black brands where Birkacre Mill stands now. (*R. Murmurs.*) Hark to yon! (*Murmur.*) Dick's loosed his lads! Let's away, and leave them to their work. Come — —

Margt. Nay, then, father. If you will not lift hand to stay them I will!

Peter. Thou!

Margt. Have I not stood before this between his work and a misguided mob? But then I was mad—the blind tool o' their madness and thy hate. I am wiser now.

Mob enter, headed by BOB and Dick, armed with sledges, & c., and carrying a beam slung, L. 2 E.

Dick. Now, lads, there's t' mill, and here are we! and

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one on us is bound to go down! Beams and sledges to t' front. (*Shouts.*) Firemen, ready wi' your tows and your quickmatch. When's gate's smashed, then bleeze her up. (*Yell.*)

Margt. (*interposing between them and mill-gates*) You know me—Maggie, Peter Hayes' daughter!

Peter. Never heed her! She's mad, I tell you. 'Tis Peter Hayes's self that says so.

[*Movement of men to front.*

Margt. No, no—'tis he—'tis you are mad—not I! Think o' what you are doing. Look at all those homes— like your own—lying so quiet yonder ; and here, the mill—that finds bread for all those bread-winners. What ha' yon poor wives and bairns done, that you should burn them out o' their bread like this—and there's many a blaze I know to be kindled at this one, and every fire will be the wasting of a hundred homes.

[*Murmurs, 'She's reet!'*

Dick. Stop her gab.

Margt. 'Tis not mills and machines you would be burning, but bread and meat, the clothing and comfort of hundreds on hundreds o' happy firesides. 'Tis not the masters you are undoing, but your fathers and brothers, your sisters and your wives, your own bonny bairns—(*Murmur.*)

Dick. Haud' thy gab, I tell thee—or——(*Threatening her with pistol.*)

Margt. (*strikes up pistol*) Who cares for thy pistol? I will not hold. (*Mob shout, 'Down with the machines!'*)

Margt. Down wi' the machines! oh, wise cry! Down wi' the horses, and let us draw t' coach ourselves! Down wi' the brains, and let men be like the brutes [that toil but with their thews and sinews and dead weight of flesh!] Down with all that spares strength, saves waste, and cheapens cost!

Dick. Nought's working-men's friend that maks one man's work worth ten——

Margt. And so sets free the wasted strength of nine for work that's wanted.

Dick. That's masters' talk—not men's.

Margt. Men's or masters', it is truth! And woe to them that will not hear it. (*Crowd are becoming impatient; a shout.*)

Dick. Poise her over!

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Peter (interposing). Leave her to me.

Margt. If you care not for the poor folk yonder, mayhap you will have some pity for me—I am Richard's Arkwright's wife.

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Peter. And see how he has sarved her.

[*Mob, ' Shame, shame!*

Margt. But as I deserved. He put me from his heart and his home. He had a right. I was false wife to him then—I will be true wife to him now!

Dick. Enow o' t' crazy wench's talk—down wi' gates, lads!

[*Tremendous shout, and the mob rush on.*

Margt. If nought else will stay you, think of the danger to yourselves—you are giving your lives to the dragoons, who have been sent for from Chorley—who will be here anon.

Peter. Never heed her!

Dick. Dragoons! Who sent for them?

Margt. What matters—suppose I did?

Peter. 'Tis a lie, I say; but, lie or truth, there's time to burn the mill before they come.

Dick. To the gates! You beams and sledges there!

[*Mob cheer, and make a movement forward.*

Margt. I tell you again—'tis your own ruin you are working—not Richard Arkwright's.

Arkwright appears at the gate with gun, followed by Chadwick and gentlemen.

Ark. That's a true word, whoever spoke it. I am armed, and so are my friends here.

Enter Hilkiah quickly from gate with blunderbuss.

Hilkiah. And so am I.

Ark. I've done you lads nought but good, and I'm not disposed to put up with ruin in return, be it from Jack or gentleman.

Hilkiah. You see, lads, we were warned—you'd best be.

Bob. Gang in at 'em, lads!

Arkw. The first that raises his hand against this gate will never raise another.

Hilkiah. The dragoons have been sent for from Chorley.

Bob. And 'twas your lass that's split on us! (*To Peter.*) —Chuck her into mill-lead, lads.

[*They seize Margaret and drag her towards mill-stream.*

Nancy (entering quickly over bridge). Save her, Richard Arkwright—'tis thy wife! (*Officer appears.*) You are under the fire of the dragoons, my lads!

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Clayton. Drop your weapons!

[*Mob shrink back cowed.*

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Arkw. (rushes up, strikes down Bob, and saves Margaret) Let mine be the first voice she hears—mine the first face she sees. Margaret, speak, lass—'tis Dick, thy husband; speak, my long-suffering, ill-used wife!

Margt. She that was thy wife once—when she was not worthy thee.

Arkw. She that was my wife when I was a poorer, and oft a happier man—she that shall be my wife now, if she'll only forget and forgive.

Margt. Forgive, but not forget!

Arkw. Peter Hayes, I was hard upon thee, too; wilt take this hand—a clean hand—from Richard Arkwright?

Margt. Oh, come with us, father, and let our love make happy the evening of thy days!

Nancy. Take it, Mr. Hayes, take it—they have to mak' a grandfather of thee yet.

Peter (taking his hand). There's my hand, Dick; but remember, I was first with th' rolling machine.

Arkw. Aye, so thou wert, and thou shalt have a royalty out of mine.

Margt. And be mine the woman's royalty—the ruling of a well-ordered home! Oh, I dreamed not of such happiness! Friends, do not call me back to a waking less happy than my dream!

CURTAIN

NOTE. — This play was suggested to me by a story, 'Joan Merry-weather,' one of a collection of tales by Miss Katherine Saunders, in which her father had a share. As Miss Saunders wished her father's name to appear in the play-bills rather than her own, the name of John Saunders stands on the bills as joint author, in accordance with the very proper French practice of so recording the name of the author of a story which has served as the groundwork of a play.